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경영학석사 학위논문

Prospective moral licensing in the consumer choice

-Focusing on moral intention's temporal distance-

소비자 선택에서 장래의 도덕적 라이선싱

-윤리적 의사의 시간적 거리를 중심으로-

2019 년 8 월

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Abstract

Prospective moral licensing in the consumer choice

-Focusing on moral intention's temporal distance-

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Whereas early research focused on prior good deeds as a source of moral license, recent research reveals additional sources. This article focuses on the effects of prospective moral licensing: how planning to perform a future moral behavior affects the self-indulgence behavior. At the same time, this paper discusses whether the temporal distance (far/near) of moral intention affects prospective moral licensing. Across three studies, we explored whether anticipating engaging in a moral behavior (taking part in charity activities) both in the near and distant future leads people to express the preference for relatively luxury products in the

present (Study 1 and 2). In Study 3, we examined whether the effectiveness of prospective moral licensing will be consumed or not, provides direct evidence for the moral credit model. In the case of ambiguous moral intentions, participants who imagine volunteering in the future show a preference for relatively luxury products. In the group that imagined becoming a volunteer a year later, the result was copied. Participants who imagine volunteering in recent weeks will not show a preference for relatively luxury products.

Keywords: licensing effect, temporal distance, self-concept

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Imagine such a scenario. An undergraduate student saw a poster of the local blood bank on the way to the class. The blood bank is currently in short supply of type O blood, and called on people to volunteer blood donation. He made a slight consideration and decided to go on a blood donation when he had time. Soon after he arrived at the classroom, he browsed a shopping site he usually visited before class. Summer is coming so he plans to buy some summer clothes for himself. At this time, a pair of jeans with good design entered his sight, but the price is higher than his usual consumption. Will he buy this pair of jeans? Or choose another one that is more affordable?

The above scenario illustrates the idea that was explored in this paper: prospective moral self-licensing. Does planning to act morally in the future allow one to act immorally in the present? For example, if you plan on donating blood tomorrow, are you more likely to express a self-indulgence preference now? In addition, if you plan to go to Cambodia's rural primary school for volunteering activities next summer, are you more likely to express a self-indulgence preference now? In many studies on licensing effects, the moral behavior or intention is often time-blurred. But a series of evidence suggests that the impact of pre-moral behavior or moral motivation on post-action is also affected by time

distance. Across three studies this paper demonstrate that when people plan to engage in moral behavior in the future, it makes them more likely to respond in a morally questionable way in the present. At the same time, the time distance will also make sense.

Chapter 2. Literature review

1. Moral licensing

Previous literatures argue that moral self-licensing occurs because good deeds make people feel secure in their moral self-regard. When making morally relevant decisions, people may survey their previous behavior. If they can point to past moral behavior, it can make them less concerned about engaging in behavior that is morally dubious because they are confident in their overall morality. Monin and Miller (2001) first demonstrated this moral self-licensing by showing that participants were more likely to make morally ambiguous decisions (e.g., say a job was better suited for a White candidate) after first performing a non-prejudiced behavior (e.g., selecting a minority candidate for a different job). Researches showed that people who have a past history of socially desirable actions in a particular behavioral domain feel licensed to undertake morally

questionable behavior in that same domain. Also, a past history of socially desirable behavior in one behavioral domain can even license people to undertake morally questionable behavior in another domain.

In addition to moral behaviors licensing subsequent immoral actions, licensing effects can occur without an individual actually engaging in moral behavior at the time of the licensing. Thinking about past moral behavior (Jordan, Mullen, & Murnighan, 2011) or writing about oneself as a moral person (Sachdeva, Iliev, & Medin, 2009) can decrease the likelihood of subsequently performing charitable acts. Having a friend who is a minority group member (Bradley-Geist, King, Skorinko, Hebl, & McKenna, 2010), expressing support for gay rights or espousing nonprejudiced beliefs (Krumm & Corning, 2008) can all license morally dubious behavior. Whereas early research focused on prior good deeds as a source of moral license, recent research reveals additional sources. For example, people may act licensed after reflecting on *counterfactual transgressions*—bad things they could have done, but did not do.

(Effron DA, Miller DT, Monin B, 2012) In addition, some studies have shown that people may act licensed when they can reflect on prefactual virtues—good deeds that they plan to perform (Khan U, Dhar R, 2007; Cascio J, Plant EA, 2015) For example, undergraduates were more likely to express overtly prejudiced views after pledging to donate blood (Cascio J, Plant EA, 2015) .

2. Moral licensing in consumer behavior

Distinguishing from the specific areas of behaviors, in general, moral self-licensing has been studied in the contexts of political incorrectness, pro-social behavior, and consumer choice.

The anxiety associated with political correctness in the contemporary United States (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998) provides numerous opportunities to observe moral self-licensing. Monin and Miller (2001) first studied the issue of licensing for racial discrimination in a study. They asked white participants to answer: Is the police position more suitable for whites, blacks, or the same? Before this, the research participants needed to complete an employment task. The results show that participants in the follow-up mission who have the opportunity to hire black job seekers are more likely to choose whites for police positions. In general, establishing one's lack of prejudice, even with a token gesture like choosing the best-qualified candidate who happens to be a member of a minority group, licenses individuals to express otherwise dubious preferences, such as those that favor Whites over minorities.

Also, research has examined how moral self-licensing can disinhibit selfish behavior (Sachdeva et al., 2009; Jordan et al. , 2009; Mazar, N.& Zhong, C. B.,2010). Sachdeva, Iliev and MEDIN (2009) require participants to use nine positive traits (eg, fairness, kindness) or nine morally negative traits (eg, selfish)

to write an article about themselves or their knowledge. At the end of the study, participants had the opportunity to donate part of the compensation to charity. Consistent with the above logic, participants who are assigned to use positive characteristics to write their own are the least donated in these four conditions. In addition, several experiments have examined similar effects. Overall, when individuals have had a chance to establish their kindness, generosity, or compassion, they should worry less about engaging in behaviors that might appear to violate pro-social norms. (see review by Anna C. Merritt, Daniel A. Effron & Benot Monin, 2010)

Though licensing in the moral domain is widely discussed because the motivation to feel and appear moral is widely shared (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Monin, 2007), but licensing effects can also be observed in a wide variety of other domains that have personal value for individuals. Moral self-licensing can thus be located within a broader class of phenomena in which personal characteristics and behavior can either give people license to act on their motivations or constrain them from doing so (see Miller & Effron, 2009; Miller, Effron, & Zak, 2009).

Many scholars believe that everyday purchasing decisions are tinged with morality. At the extreme, some utilitarian philosophers argue that it is immoral to spend disposable income on unnecessary things because that money could go to

people in need elsewhere (Singer, 1972). Though probably few consumers subscribe to such drastic views, buying luxury items or frivolous goods is nonetheless associated with feelings of guilt and self-indulgence (Dahl, Honea, & Manchanda, 2003). Khan and Dhar (2006) explored the licensing effect in consumer choice directly. Participants who had first been asked to imagine doing something altruistic (e.g., volunteering for a charity) chose the luxury item more often than those who had not. Another study by Khan and Dhar (2007, Study 1) demonstrated that optimistic expectations of future consumer behavior could license people to make more self-indulgent choices in the present. Therefore, the author made the following assumption:

H1: Expressing moral intention could license participants to show a preference for luxury goods in the present.

3. Temporal distance

There are two possible directions for how time distance affects the moral licensing effect. First, according to construal level theory (CLT; Trope & Liberman, 2003, 2010) and action- identification theory (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987), actions and events can be construed in either an abstract or concrete fashion. Abstract construals are schematic, decontextualized, detail-poor representations that capture superordinate, central features. Conversely, concrete construals are contextualized,

detail-rich representations that capture subordinate, incidental features (Trope & Liberman, 2010). One way to operationalize level of abstraction is temporal distance (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Linking to self-regulating behavior, Conway, P., & Peetz, J. (2012) conducted related research. Their first two studies prove that recalling one's moral actions in the recent past led to compensatory behavior, while recalling one's moral actions in the distant past led to consistency oriented behavior.

However, additional findings indicate that people may make more indulgent choices as temporal distance increases. Kivetz and Simonson (2002) demonstrate that consumers tend to make choices of future rewards that are indulgent in nature. People precommit to future indulgence in order to avoid excessive self-control, and this phenomenon is accentuated as temporal distance increases (Keinan and Kivetz 2008; Kivetz and Keinan 2006; Kivetz and Simonson 2002). Laran, & Juliano (2010) found when exposed to morally positive information prime (saving money) condition, participants were willing to donate more money in the present whereas spending more money in the future. While in the neutral information prime condition, participants were willing to donate the same amount of money in the present and in the future.

Thence, the time distance may also affect the licensing effect from other aspects, especially the moral intention rather than the moral behavior that has already occurred. First, I am concerned with the cost of implementing moral intent, including money costs, time costs, and so on. According to previous studies, when manipulating the moral behavior of participants, there is hardly any mention of the time or effort and cost of doing so. However, Gneezy, Ayelet, Imas, Alex. etl (2012) confirmed that cost plays an important role in moral regulation. They suggest that costly pro-social behaviors serve as a signal of pro-social identity. In contrast, costless pro-social behavior, not following much of one's pro-social identity, so subsequent behavior shows the reductions in pro-social behavior associated with licensing. According to the theory of time discounting, people tend to obtain the same value in the near future rather than in the distant future. Similarly, when faced with cost, people are more disgusted to pay it in the near future. It can be said that the time distance will affect people's perception of the time/material cost. At the same time, according to the construal level theory, compared to the abstract structure, conversely, concrete construals are contextualized, more likely to emphasize the difficulties and twists and turns actually encountered (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Therefore, I suspect that under the condition of sufficient information, when participants consider conducting some kind of moral behavior in the near future rather than the long-term, he will

pay more attention to time, energy, and other negative difficulties, and consider the price paid for it. . In other words, recent moral behavior may be more costly than moral behavior in the distant future, which may affect the licensing effect.

Also, research examining goal pursuit has demonstrated that when people expect to engage in goal-relevant behavior in the future (e.g., being healthy), they are more likely to act counter to their goal in the present if they perceive their expectation of future goal-relevant behavior as indicating goal progress as opposed to goal commitment (Zhang, Fishbach, & Dhar, 2007). If people perceive that their prospective moral behavior represents progress toward their goal of being a moral person, then it may lead to moral licensing in the near term. Moral behaviors that are farther away from time to time than moral behaviors that occur in the near future are more likely to be seen as a process, which is more likely to cause indulgent behavior. Therefore, the author made the following assumption:

H2: Prospective moral licensing effect could be moderated by temporal distance. Specifically, compared to moral intention that occurs in the near future, expressing the moral intention that occurs in the far future licenses a preference for luxury goods in the present.

4. Mechanisms underlying licensing

Described in broad terms, moral licensing occurs because one's behavioral history allows one to act in a way that might otherwise signal specific or general moral discredit. But how does one's behavioral history allow one to avoid discredit? Two different answers have emerged from the literature.

Licensing via balance: The moral credits model

One version of licensing states that it feels fine to commit bad deeds as long as they are offset by prior good deeds of a similar magnitude (Nisan, 1991). The metaphor is one of a moral bank account: good deeds establish moral credits (cf. Hollander, 1958) that can be “withdrawn” to “purchase” the right to do bad deeds with impunity. According to this model, when people feel licensed, they know that what they are about to do is bad, but they feel that their past behavior has earned them the right to stray some from the shining path while still retaining a positive balance in their moral bank account.

Licensing via construal: The moral credentials model

In the second version of licensing, steeped more in the tradition of causal attribution, good deeds change the meaning of subsequent behavior. Rather than making one feel entitled to transgress, good deeds clarify that the subsequent behavior is not a transgression at all. Because in this model one's past track record is an important piece of information casting light on one's present

behavior, it is usually called the moral credentials model. Past behavior serves as a lens through which one construes current behavior, and when the motivation for current behavior is ambiguous, it is disambiguated in line with past behavior.

In short, these two paths differ in the following ways. First, whereas credentials change the way subsequent behavior is construed, credits do not. Second, credits boost one's moral self-concept, allowing one to tolerate a challenge to the moral self-concept caused by misdeeds; while licensing via credentials don't need to involve such fluctuation. Thus, credits should diminish over time and require performing morally laudable behavior.

The data presented by proponents of each model fit, for the most part, both interpretations, however, there has been no study to test two possible pathways simultaneously. Fortunately, consistent with the above summary, Anna C. Merritt, et al (2010) proposed two touchstones in their review (whether the meaning of the licensing behavior has changed and whether the license has been exhausted). In this study, the author will design an experiment for examining the pathway in accordance with this idea.

As mentioned before, prior behavior is most relevant for disambiguating morally dubious behavior when the two behaviors are in the same domain (e.g., both related to racial prejudice). Thus, prior behavior may license a misdeed in the same domain via moral credentials (e.g., Effron et al., 2009; Merritt et al., 2009;

Monin & Miller, 2001), but license a misdeed in a different domain via moral credits (e.g., Mazar & Zhong, 2010). Therefore, the author made the following assumption:

H3: following the credit model, the effectiveness of prospective moral licensing effect is limit.

Chapter 3. Study

3.1 Pretest

Before the start of the formal experiment, I pre-tested three groups of products that were two alternatives from the same product class that differ in their respective perception of luxury. They are sunglasses, vacuum cleaners, and wine. In the description of the product, the utilitarian product emphasizes the practical or healthy side, such as effectively preventing ultraviolet rays (sunglasses), rich in multivitamins and organic matter, and improving insomnia (wine). The luxury merchandise emphasizes aesthetic design, enjoyment, and so on. Specific examples and results can be found in Appendix 4. Totally, product A of each group was proved to be relatively luxury and hedonic through testing.

3.2 Study 1

The first experiment is to test whether a person will be more likely to choose something more self-indulgent if he or she previously expressed an unrelated moral intention. What's more, I will test whether such an effect can be repeated under the condition that manipulating the time distance of such moral intent.

Study 1.1

Method

Participants. 72 American participants (30 female and 42 male) were recruited from the website Mechanical Turk (Amazon) and paid for their participation. Data obtained via Mechanical Turk demonstrates psychometric properties similar to laboratory samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011).

Procedure. The group of the moral intention were asked to imagine participating in a total 8-hour volunteer activity and read about two projects offered. There is no mention in the description of the exact information about the time of participation. The two volunteer projects are online projects to help children in underdeveloped areas practice oral English, as well as environmental projects that provide recycling of used clothes (see details in Appendix 2). Participants were asked to choose one of them and simply stated the reasons to ensure that they read the description

carefully. The control group did an irrelevant English spelling check task (similar to Khan and Dhar, 2006). After completing the filling task, the participants were asked to enter another unrelated commodity purchase intention survey. They were asked to imagine shopping in a shopping mall and shown two types of sunglasses (as mentioned in the previous pretest) and what they would like to choose currently.

Results

As shown in the figure 1, participants who imagined participating in the volunteer activities (69.4%) were more inclined to choose more expensive sunglasses than the control group (44.4%), showing a typical licensing effect ($\chi^2 = 4.589$, $p = 0.032^*$).

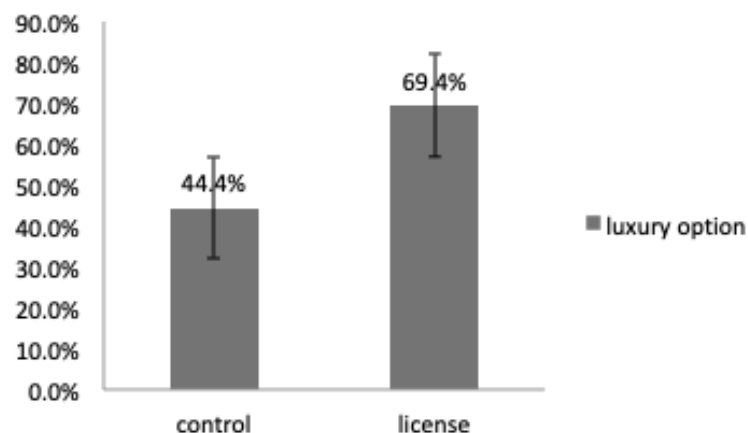


Figure 1: The ratio of choosing relative luxury options in Study 1.1

Study 1.2

Method

Participants. 87 American participants (31 female and 56 male) were recruited from the website Mechanical Turk (Amazon) and paid for their participation. Data obtained via Mechanical Turk demonstrates psychometric properties similar to laboratory samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011).

Procedure. Similar to study 1.1, participants in the license condition were asked to imagine that they would participate in a volunteer activity. What is important is that in the “Temporal Distance: near” group, the participants read the following notice firstly: *You have two volunteer projects of interest and you plan to choose one of them to participate in a few weeks.* Similarly, participants of the “Temporal Distance: far” group were told that the participation time for volunteer activities was one year later. Subsequently, I checked the effectiveness of the time distance manipulation with "The volunteer activity I will participate in will happen in recent times." on a 9-point scale (1 = completely agree; 9 = completely disagree). Next, as in study 1.1, all three groups of participants completed a simple fill task and a product selection task. Finally, they answered the questions of age and gender and received corresponding returns.

Results

Manipulation checks. First, a t-test was performed on the perceived time distance between the two groups of time distances. "Time distance: far" group's perceived time distance is $M = 5.62$, $SD = 2.21$, significantly larger than "Time distance: near" group, which is $M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.91$ ($t = 4.325$, $p < 0.01$). This shows that the manipulation is successful.

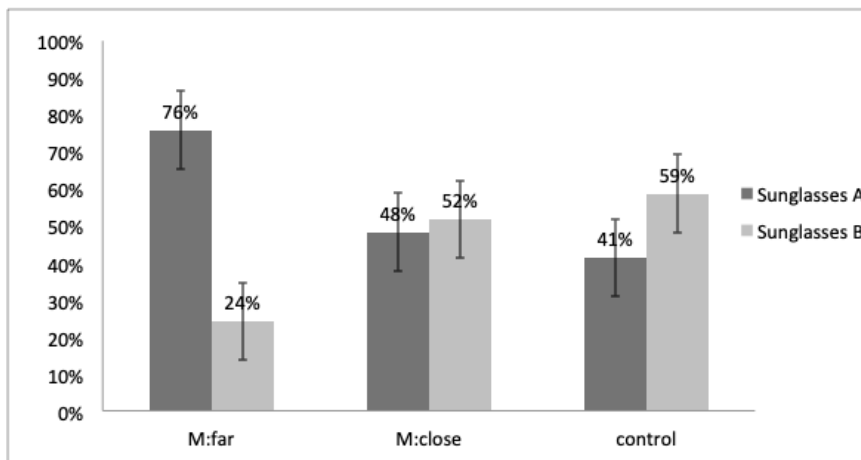


Figure 2: The ratio of choosing relative luxury options in Study 1.2

Licensing effect. First, using the chi-square test (cross-analysis) to study the difference between "group" and "choice", "group" showed a 0.05 level significance for "choice" ($\chi^2 = 7.81$, $P = 0.02 < 0.05$). In the "Time distance: far" treatment, 75.86% of participants chose the relative luxury option (sunglasses A), which is significantly larger than the average. When encoding the relative luxury option to 1, and utilitarian to 0, further t-tests showed that participants' preference for the

relative luxury option in the "M: far" condition which is 0.76(SD =0.44) is significantly greater than the control group's 0.41 (SD=0.5, $t = -2.797$, $p = 0.007^{**}$), and the "M: near" condition's 0.48 (SD=0.51, $t = 2.219$, $p = 0.031^{*}$). Meanwhile, there is no difference was found between the "Time distance: near" treatment and the control group ($t = -0.520$, $p = 0.605$).

Discussion

Study 1.1 shows that when participants consider participating in an moral behavior, they exhibit a typical moral licensing effect: they tend to choose relatively luxury consumer goods rather than the control group. This is consistent with previous research. More importantly, Study 1.2 shows that participants' response to moral intention is effectively mitigated when manipulating the temporal distance of moral intent. When participants consider distant moral intent, they exhibit a licensing effect: they are more willing to choose a relative luxury option than the participants in the control group. Conversely, when participants consider a close moral intent, this licensing effect disappears: the proportion of participants who choose the relative luxury option is similar to that of the control group.

More importantly, I try to find the impact of time distance on the licensing effect. In order to discuss it separately from the influence of moral intentions, the control group also needs to be manipulated by the time distance to further explore. Also,

the study also need to examine self-concept's mediating role for the moral effect of license. In the next study 2, these explorations will be carried out.

3.2 Study 2

Method

Participants. 116 undergraduates (53 female, 63 male) from Peking University were recruited to participate in the survey, with an average age of 20.6. Each participant was told to participate in a master's thesis project and received a \$2 gift (on-campus supermarket voucher) in return.

Procedure. The overall process of the study is the same as Study 1.2. The difference is that the control group will read a fictional story (in English) that describes a college student who will be involved in the trip. The travel time between the two sets of materials is one year and a few weeks respectively (consistent with moral intention conditions). Participants were asked to find out the number of misspelled words in the paragraph and answer the confidence (similar to before) and then answer "The event I have read about will happen in recent times." on a 9-point scale (1 = completely agree; 9 = completely disagree). Then, all participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed (1 = strongly disagree to 9 = strongly agree) with the following four statements: "I am compassionate", "I am sympathetic", "I am warm", and "I am helpful". These

items were used as they exhibited a high degree of reliability in terms of coefficient alpha (Cronbach alpha = 0.84). The next process is consistent with the previous study^{1,2}. This study used a set of relative products mentioned in the pre-test ---vacuum cleaner.

Results

Manipulation checks. Two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the influence of moral intention (1=moral intention, 0=control) and temporal distance (1=far, 0= near) on Perceived temporal distance. It can be seen from the table below that the moral intention does not show significant effect ($F=0.247$, $P=0.620$), indicating that the moral intention does not affect the Perceived temporal distance. In addition, the temporal distance showed significant effect ($F=32.979$, $P=0.000<0.05$), demonstrating that manipulation is effective.

Licensing effect. Using two-way analysis of variance to study the relationship between moral intention (1=moral intention, 0=control) and temporal distance (1=far, 0= near) for choice (1= relative luxury, 0= utilitarian), moral intention showed significant effect ($F=6.263$, $P=0.014<0.05$), indicating that the main effect exists, and moral intention could affect choice. The temporal distance did not show significant effect ($F=0.927$, $P=0.338>0.05$), indicating that the temporal distance does not affect the choice. Specific analysis by one-way analysis of variance found

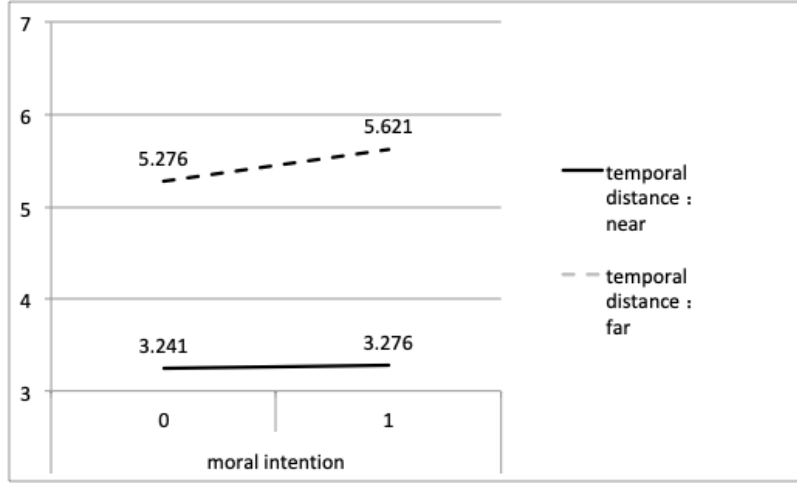


Figure 3: Comparison of mean perceived temporal distance in study 2

that the mean value of choice under the moral intention condition (0.71) is significantly higher than the mean under control conditions (0.48, $F=6.27$, $P=0.01$). Specifically, participants in the license group showed more luxury preferences ($M_{\text{moral}} = 0.828$, $SD_{\text{moral}} = 0.38$, $M_{\text{control}} = 0.448$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 0.51$; $t = -3.214$, $p = 0.002 < 0.01$) under the treatment of distant temporal distance, and the near-distance treatment, prospective moral licensing effect It becomes no longer significant ($M_{\text{moral}} = 0.586$, $SD_{\text{moral}} = 0.5$, $M_{\text{control}} = 0.517$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 0.51$; $t = -0.52$, $p = 0.605$).

Moderator analysis. First, moral intention predicted self-concept ($\beta = 0.26$, $p = 0.005$). The effect of moral intention on self-concept was weakened ($\beta = 0.257$, $p = 0.005$) when temporal distance was included in the equation ($F = 6.542$, $P = 0.002$), detailed coefficients could be found in the table below.

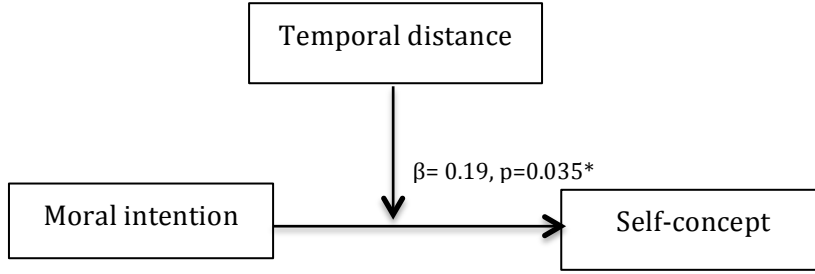


Figure 4: Perceived temporal distance's moderating effect

Table 1: Temporal distance moderating effect

	B	SE	Beta	t	p-value	R ²	Adjust R ²	F	D-W value
Constant	4.983	0.22	-	22.609	0.000**				
Moral intention	0.897	0.312	0.26	2.877	0.005**	0.068	0.059	8.275 (0.005**)	2.077
Constant	4.667	0.263	-	17.756	0.000**				
Moral intention	0.885	0.307	0.257	2.884	0.005**	0.104	0.088	6.542 (0.002**)	2.132
Temporal distance	0.655	0.307	0.19	2.133	0.035*				

Dependent variable: self-concept

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

Mediator analysis. I next examined whether the effect of moral intention on preference for luxury option is mediated by a shift in self-concept in the three treatments, using the technique proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) in conjunction with the bootstrapping method of Shrout and Bolger (2002). Significance coefficients were calculated using bias- corrected confidence intervals, as these have been shown to provide more accurate estimates for small

samples (Efron and Tibshirani 1993). First, moral intention predicted both self-concept ($\beta = 0.26$, $p=0.005$) and luxury preference ($\beta = 0.228$, $p=0.014$). The effect of moral intention on luxury preference was no longer significant ($\beta = 0.056$, $p = 0.433$) when self-concept was included in the equation ($F=47.912$, $P<0.01$), and self-concept was a significant predictor of luxury preference ($\beta = 0.661$, $p = <0.01$).

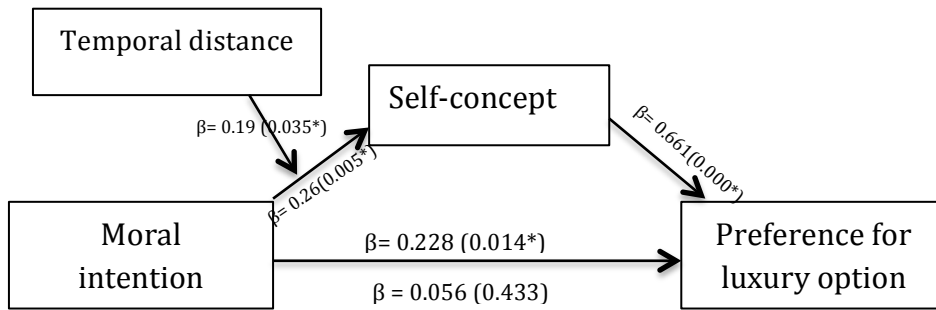


Figure 5: Self-concept mediating effect

Table 2: self-concept's mediating effect

	B	SE	Beta	t	p-value	R ²	Adjust R ²	F	D-W value
Constant	4.983	0.22	-	22.609	0.000**				
Moral intention	0.897	0.312	0.26	2.877	0.005**	0.068	0.059	8.275 (0.005**)	2.077
Dependent variable: self-concept									
Constant	0.483	0.063	-	7.626	0.000**				
Moral intention	0.224	0.09	0.228	2.503	0.014*	0.052	0.044	6.267 (0.014*)	2.211

Constant	-0.455	0.113	-	-4.043	0.000**				
Moral intention	0.055	0.07	0.056	0.788	0.433	0.459	0.449	47.912 (0.000**)	1.826
self-concept	0.188	0.02	0.661	9.216	0.000**				
Dependent variable: Preference for luxury option									
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01									

Discussion

First, this study replicates the prospective moral licensing effect mentioned by Study 1 above: overall, participants who consider volunteering in the future are more likely to choose a more expensive vacuum cleaner than those who in the control conditions. At the same time, the time distance does not show a significant main effect on the selection, meaning that it does not affect the choice of the participants.

More importantly, although this typical self-regulation phenomenon could be easily replicated in distant temporal distance treatment, when participants consider the same moral activities in the near future, they showed a more rational aspect: not tend to choose relatively luxury option. This provides consistent evidence for the hypothesis of this paper. Secondly, the study specifically examined the mediating effects of self-concept and the regulatory effects of temporal distance. Both have proven to be effective.

3.3 Study 3

The main purpose of study 3 is to conduct a mechanism test on the licensing effect. As mentioned earlier, considering that the pre-behavior intention and post-indulgence behavior is not a domain, I prefer that in this case licensing effect to occur via *moral credit balance*. In this study, I expanded the indulgence of consumption choices from one to three. Thus, if the *moral credit model* is followed, the points will be consumed as the decision to indulge consumption occurs, and the next two decisions will be closer to the control group. Conversely, if the moral groups always show more indulgent intention than the control group, then it means that the credit model is not met. Secondly, after directly inspecting the three indulgence decisions, the consumer's intuitive feelings about the products can be confirmed whether the lens effect from the *moral credentials model* occurs.

Method

Participants. 86 American participants (21 female and 65 male) were recruited from the website Mechanical Turk (Amazon) and paid for their participation. Data obtained via Mechanical Turk demonstrates psychometric properties similar to laboratory samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011).

Procedure. The materials and procedure of Study 2 were identical to those of Study 1.2 before entering the choice part. After completing the filling task, participants were declared to enter an unrelated survey of purchase intentions. They were showed three sets of items in order and were asked to make a choice between the two items. The first group is sunglasses, the second group is wine, and the last group is vacuum cleaner (as mentioned in the pretest). Each group of items is presented in turn, and the next set of item descriptions can be entered after the selection is over. The participants cannot return to modify the previous choice.

Result

Manipulation checks. First, a t-test was performed on the perceived time distance between the two groups of time distances. "Time distance: far" group's perceived time distance is $M = 4.39$, $SD = 1.07$, significantly larger than "Time distance: near" group, which is $M = 3.38$, $SD = 2.35$ ($t = 2.108$, $p = 0.041$). This shows that the manipulation is successful.

Licensing effect. In the first product selection, with the chi-square test (cross-analysis) "group" showed a 0.05 level significance for "choice" ($X^2=9.672$, $P=0.008$). 78.6% of the participants who imagined volunteering after one year chose a more expensive vacuum cleaner, significantly exceeding the other two conditions. At the same time, only 51.7% of the participants who imagined

volunteering in the next few weeks chose expensive vacuum cleaner, which was no significant difference compared to the control group (44.8%,). As shown in the table below, in the second and third selections, the “selection” between the groups did not show significant differences through the chi-square test (cross-analysis), which meant that the license effect disappeared.

Table 3: choice of relative luxury options in each group of study 3

	Control	M:far	M:near	X ²	p
CHOICE1	17(58.62%)	22(78.57%)	11(37.93%)	9.672	0.008**
CHOICE 2	13(44.83%)	13(46.43%)	13(44.835)	0.02	0.99
CHOICE 3	15(51.72%)	14(50.00%)	16(55.17%)	0.159	0.924

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

Discussion

Through this study, in the initial consumer product selection, the results replicated the previous forward-looking moral licensing effect, while replicating the manipulation time distance would mitigate the licensing effect. At the same time, I observed that in the next two selection situations, participants in each group did not show any significant preference differences. This is consistent with the hypothesis of this paper: the effectiveness of the license is limited, and the “credits” obtained by expressing moral intentions will be consumed when

making indulgent choices, which is consistent with the *moral credit model*. This is direct evidence supporting the *moral credit model*.

Chapter 4. General Discussion

4.1 General Discussion

This article starts with the typical licensing effect in consumer choice and expands the source of the licensing effect: expressing a certain moral intent can also permit participants to express preferences for relatively luxury goods. At the same time, for the ethical behavior that has not yet occurred, an interesting variable is introduced: temporal distance and reveals two different behavioral tendencies after a series of verifications.

First, through the study 1.1, the typical licensing effect was successfully replicated: the study asked participants to imagine themselves participating in a volunteer activity in the future, and there was no mention of the specific time of participation in the material. These participants were found to prefer the more expensive product in subsequent consumption choice task, which could be considered indulgent. In Study 1.2, the temporal distance of moral intention is considered and manipulated by material. When participants consider distant

moral intent, they exhibit a licensing effect: they are more willing to choose a relative luxury option than the participants in the control group. Conversely, when participants consider a close moral intent, this licensing effect disappears: the proportion of participants who choose the relative luxury option is similar to that of the control group. Study 1 yielded preliminary results, and Study 2 was intended to provide more credible evidence. Therefore, a group of commodities was replaced and further research was conducted using the design 2 (far temporal distance vs. near temporal distance). Study 2 replicates the prospective moral licensing effect: overall, participants who consider volunteering in the future are more likely to choose a more expensive vacuum cleaner than those who in the control conditions. At the same time, the time distance does not affect the choice of the participants. More importantly, although this typical self-regulation phenomenon could be easily replicated in distant temporal distance treatment, when participants consider the same ethical activities in the near future, they showed a more rational aspect: not tend to choose relatively luxury option. What's more, study 2 specifically examined the mediating effects of self-concept and the regulatory effects of temporal distance.

Previous literatures argue that moral self-licensing occurs because good deeds make people feel secure in their moral self-regard. This is also true for the prospective moral licensing studied in this paper. Increasing laboratory and field

evidence reveals the breadth of sources of licensing effects. Although it is only expected that they will invest time and energy into the moral activities, the participants also feel the improvement of the moral self-concept. And under certain circumstances, the promotion of this moral self-concept has triggered moral licensing effect.

More importantly, the occurrence of ethical licenses is often not inevitable. It is undeniable that many variables may affect people's judgments and choices, making this field more complicated and interesting. When you choose some daily ingredients in the supermarket, thinking about the final exams you will face in a few weeks, you may add “sinful” chocolates to the shopping basket, or you may buy designer jeans what you think is somewhat expensive on the shopping site. But in many cases, you don't always become so impulsive. For the expected licensing effect, we consider the time distance to be a variable worth discussing.

Another main experimental result of this article is: involved to moral intention that occurs in the near future, expressing the moral intention that occurs in the far future licenses a preference for luxury goods in the present. The explanation for this result is as follows. As with the scenario set up in this study, all participants received consistent descriptions, including the content and purpose of participating volunteer activities. A Ledgerwood, Y Trope, N Liberman (2014) propose that cues about distance functionally shape evaluations to flexibly

incorporate information from their current context when individuals are acting on proximal stimuli, but to transcend these immediate details when acting on distal stimuli. Also, According to the construal level theory, compared to the abstract structure, conversely, concrete construals are contextualized, more likely to emphasize the difficulties and twists and turns actually encountered (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Considering the material in this article, two optional volunteer activities require four weeks of work, two hours a week. Considering the realities, this is actually a very costly ethical behavior. When the event is scheduled for a year, participants will pay more attention to the moral self-esteem of ethical behavior, while participants who are about to engage in ethical behavior in the near future may be more concerned with the difficulties encountered in completing this volunteer activity, including effort and time cost, etc. This may help understand why participants considered ethical behavior in a short period of time did not exhibit the same tendency to indulgence as participants who considered ethical behavior for a period of time. This is consistent with the general moral licensing phenomenon. When participants recall a certain ethical behavior, they do not consider the cost or details more when they have already done; when the participants promise to do a general moral behavior, they trend not to specifically consider the price paid for this.

In addition, this article uses study 3 to provide direct evidence for the moral credit model: the effectiveness of the license is limited, in three choices, the licensing effect is only shown in the initial selection, suggesting that the “credits” obtained by expressing moral Intentions will be consumed when making indulgent choices.

4.2 Limitation

First of all, in the choice of products, although the pre-test confirmed that each group of products is indeed relatively luxury products and practical products, the price sensitivity factor is not effectively controlled in this study. It is not known whether the perceived price difference has changed. Secondly, three of the four studies in this paper rely on online samples (Amazon Mechanical Turk). As mentioned above, invalid samples such as unfinished questionnaires and repeated submission of questionnaires account for a portion. This prompted the author to reflect on the channels of research implementation. In addition, the time points for the study setup are within a few weeks and after one year, which is very limited in the manipulation of the time distance. In some literature, "one year" nodes are also often used for closer future manipulation. A more systematic discussion of the time distance needs to be done.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 : filling task and self-concept measurement

INSTRUCTIONS

Please put the following scrambled sentences in order.

game is greatest baseball earth the on *

that is my not satchel new *

1. Please answer whether you agree with the following statement. *

	completely disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	completely agree
I am compassionate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am sympathetic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am warm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am helpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 2

INSTRUCTIONS

Please carefully read the following passage and identify the words that are not spelled right. Circle every word that is not spelled correctly.

Abebe Bikila was born in 1932 in the town of Jato, Ethiopia. He was one of the children in a large, poor family, so he went to school for a while and then went to work as a shepherd. When he was 17 years old, he enlisted in his country's army. Later, he became a member of the Imperial Guard. There he got the chance to participate in athletic competitions. He worked with a trainer named Onni Niskanen, who was from Sweden. Niskanen thought that Bikila's running time might improve if he ran in athletic shoes made with vacuum technology.

1. How many words were misspelled? *

2. How confident are you that you detected all the misspelled words? *

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not at all confident

Appendix 2

INSTRUCTIONS

Imagine that you plan to use your leisure time for short-term volunteer activities. You have two projects of interest and you plan to choose one of them to participate.

Project 1: Online English Exchange Project - "Hello, Partner".

It aims to help students in underdeveloped areas improve their oral English skills through online English language communication. Arrange partners randomly and guarantee personal privacy.

Project 2: Recycling of old clothes - "sunshine".

It is designed to make use of clean old clothes, free of charge to people in underdeveloped areas after cleaning, disinfection and refurbishment. Volunteers need to support offline promotional activities or project paperwork.

Remarks: Both volunteer programs need 【 2 hours/week, totally 4 weeks】 . No cost in each of them.

1. Which one do you want to choose? *

☐

Online English Exchange Project - "Hello, Partner".

☐

Recycling of old clothes - "sunshine".

2. Please give a short reason for your choice *

Appendix 3

INSTRUCTIONS

Please carefully read the following passage and identify the words that are not spelled right. Circle every word that is not spelled correctly.

Abebe Bikila was born in Ethiopia in 1999 and is 20 years old now. He is currently a saphomore at the University of Torism Management Department. Just like many university students, Abebe Bikila loves to travel around. And he used his spere time to earn some money through some part-time job. In recent weeks, he will travel to Chengdu, China to see the lovely pandas. This is his first trip to China so he is worried that if he would enjoy the local food, but he is still looking forward to it.

1. How many words were misspelled? *

2. How confident are you that you detected all the misspelled words? *

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not at all confident

3. The event I have read about in this article will happen in recent times. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
completely agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	completely disagree

Appendix 3

INSTRUCTIONS

Please carefully read the following passage and identify the words that are not spelled right. Circle every word that is not spelled correctly.

Abebe Bikila was born in Ethiopia in 1999 and is 20 years old now. He is currently a saphomore at the University of Torism Management Department. Just like many university students, Abebe Bikila loves to travel around. And he used his spere time to earn some money through some part-time job. In the next summer (1 year later), he will travel to Chengdu, China to see the lovely pandas. This is his first trip to China so he is worried that if he would enjoy the local food, but he is still looking forward to it.

1. How many words were misspelled? *

2. How confident are you that you detected all the misspelled words? *

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not at all confident

3. The event I have read about in this article will happen in recent times. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
completely agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	completely disagree

Appendix 4

Imagine you are going to buy a pair of sunglasses and come to a mall. There are two brands of sunglasses. Please read their introductions carefully and answer a few questions.

Sunglasses A

- Italian designers frames
- Highly resistant to scratch and impact
- Ultralight weight with adjustable temples and nose pads
- Average customer rating is 4.9 (out of 5 points)
- Price=\$110

Sunglasses B

- American frames
- Resistant to moderate impact and scrape
- Regular weight with fixed temples and nose pads
- Average customer rating is 3.9 (out of 5 points)
- Price = \$ 69

1. Which one do you want to choose? *

☐ A

☐ B

Appendix 4

Imagine you are going to buy a bottle of wine for drinking and come to a mall. There are two brands of wines. Please read their introductions carefully and answer a few questions.

wine A

- made in France > one of the world's top grape producing areas
- Five years of brewing, excellent flavor
- Average customer rating is 4.5 (out of 5 points)
- International Design Award (Wine bottle packaging)
- Price: 85 USD

wine B

- made in America
- Ordinary grape quality, general taste
- Average customer rating is 3.5 (out of 5 points)
- Containing a variety of amino acids, minerals and vitamins, which helps promote digestive function, improve mild insomnia, etc.
- Price: 30 USD

2. Which one do you want to choose? *

- ☐ A
- ☐ B

Appendix 4

Imagine you are going to buy a vacuum cleaner and come to a mall. There are two brands of vacuum cleaners. Please read their introductions carefully and answer a few questions.

vacuum cleaner A

- Strong suction that absorbs allergens/fine dust
- One hand-held design, weighing only 2 kg
- International Award for Aesthetic Design
- Average customer rating is 4.8 (out of 5 points)
- Price: 169 USD



vacuum cleaner B

- general Suction : can absorb general household dust
- Traditional design style, total weight 5 kg
- Need to connect to the power cord when using
- Average customer rating is 3.9 (out of 5 points)
- Price: 59 USD



Appendix 5 : Pretest

Method

Thirty participants from the M-Turk platform participated in the pretest, and each participant received \$0.60 as a reward. I showed participants the three sets of products used in study 1 and study 2, including sunglasses, vacuum cleaners and red wine (see appendix 3) . Next, the participants were asked to imagine they went shopping at a mall, and carefully read the details of each group of products, then answer the their feelings about the product. Questionnaire content examples and specific results are as follows.

1. What kind of product do you think vacuum cleaner A (B) is? *

	utilitarian	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	hedonic
vacuum cleaner A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
vacuum cleaner B	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Do you think vacuum cleaner A (B) is a luxury item? *

	not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	extremely
vacuum cleaner A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
vacuum cleaner B	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Table 1: result of pretest

Stimuli		Q1: hedonic		Q2: luxury	
VACUNM CLEANNER	A	M=5.158	t = 2.5767 p-value = 0.0143*	M=5.632	t = 3.7997 p-value = 0.0005*
	B	M=3.368		M=3.158	
WINE	A	M=7.789	t = 5.4938 p-value = 3.607e-06*	M=6.526	t = 4.6744 p-value = 4.459e-05*
	B	M=4.684		M=3.632	
SUNGLASSES	A	M=5.435	t = 2.6239 p-value = 0.0119*	M=6.174	t = 4.657 p-value = 3.253e-05*
	B	M=3.957		M=3.826	

Confidence interval: 95%

국문초록

소비자 선택에서 장래의 도덕적 라이선싱

-윤리적 의사의 시간적 거리를 중심으로 -

이전의 연구는 도덕적 허가의 자료로써 이전의 선행에 초점을 둔 것에 반하여, 최근의 연구는 추가적인 자료들을 밝혀냈다. 이 글은 장래의 도덕적 허가의 효과: 미래 도덕적 행동을 수행할지를 계획하는 것이 어떻게 방중행동에 영향을 미치는지에 초점을 둔다. 동시에, 이 논문은 도덕적 의사의 시간적 거리(땀,가까움)가 장래의 도덕적 허가에 영향을 미치는지에 관하여 토의한다. 세 연구를 아울러서, 우리는 가까운 미래나 먼 미래에 도덕적 행동(봉사 활동에 참여하는 것)에 관여하는 것이, 현재 비교적 사치한 상품 선호를 나타내는 것으로 이어질지 예측할 수 있는지 분석한다(연구 1 과 2). 연구 3 에서 우리는 장래 도덕적 허가의 효과가 나타날지 아닐지에 관하여, 그 효과가 도덕적 신용 모델의 직접적인 증거를 제공하는지에 관하여 조사한다.

총과적으로 정리를 하자면 모호한 도덕적 의도의 경우에 있어서, 미래 도덕적 행동 참여할 것을 상상한 참가자들은 비교적 사치품에 선호를 보인다. 일년 뒤 도덕적 행동 참여할 것으로 예상한 참가자 그룹에서의 결과는 전과 똑같으로 보인다. 최근 몇 주 이내에 참여할 것으로 예상한 참가자들은 비교적 사치품에 선호를 보이지 않을 것이다.

주요어: 도덕적 허가, 시간적 거리, 자아 개념

학번: 2017-24824